

Message Text

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67

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DEPARTMENT REPEAT AS DESIRED

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OAS, EC, US, CU

SUBJ: QUITO OAS MEETING: EVE-OF-THE CONFERENCE MOOD

1. THE MOOD OF QUITO ON THE EVE OF THE XV OAS MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS SEEMS SOMEWHAT SUBDUED. IT IS MARKED BY A NOTICEABLE CONCERN IN OFFICIAL CIRCLES OVER THE MEETING'S SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME AND IS PUNCTUATED BY AN UNDERCURRENT OF FEVERISH ACTIVITY AS THE CITY BENDS TO THE TASK OF HOSTING A MAJOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.

2. THE GOE HAS LONG SINCE MADE ITS OWN POSITION CLEAR. IT BELIEVES THE CUBAN SANCTIONS TO BE OUTDATED AND THAT THEY SHOULD BE LIFTED. THIS STEMS FROM NO PARTICULAR ATTACHMENT TO THE CUBAN QUESTION PER SE AS CUBA HAS NOT BEEN A LIVE ISSUE HERE FOR MANY YEARS. RATHER, FONMIN LUCIO PAREDES AND HIS MINISTRY SEEM GENUINELY CONCERNED THAT CONTINUANCE OF CUBAN SANCTIONS MAY SERIOUSLY DAMAGE LATIN AMERICAN UNITY. THEY FEAR THAT MORE AND MORE OAS MEMBERS WILL UNILATERALLY REPUDIATE THE SANCTIONS, THUS WEAKENING THE ORGANIZATION BY UNDERMINING ITS JURIDICAL BASES. HENCE, THE CALL FOR FREEING EACH MEMBER TO GO ITS OWN WAY.

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3. THE GOE IS ALSO DETERMINED TO HOST A SMOOTH, SUCCESS-

FUL CONFERENCE. LUCIO PAREDES AS PRESIDENT WILL DO ALL IN HIS POWER TO KEEP THE MEETING FOCUSED ON THE ISSUE AT HAND, WITH A MINIMUM OF POLEMICS AND THE AVOIDANCE OF EXTRANEOUS ISSUES. QUITO IS NOW ON THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE MAP, HAVING THIS YEAR HOSTED (AMONG OTHER) MEETINGS OF IA-ECOSOC AND OPEC, AND THE GOE WOULD LIKE NOTHING BETTER THAN A CONFERENCE TOUR-DE-FORCE. IDEALLY, THIS WOULD BE A THOROUGH (BUT CALM) DISCUSSION FOLLOWED BY A SUCCESSFUL VOTE TO RAISE SANCTIONS. FAILING THE NECESSARY FOURTEEN YD

FR-/ LUCIO PAREDES SEEMS PREPARED TO SUPPORT A COMPROMISE MOTION WHICH, RECOGNIZING THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN STATES ARE A MATTER OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY, WOULD PERMIT OAS MEMBER STATES TO DEAL WITH CUBA AS THEY SEE FIT. WHATEVER THE CASE, LUCIO PAREDES HAS MADE KNOWN HIS INTENTION TO HAVE THE MEETING END ON TIME.

4. EDITORIAL OPINION HAS TENDED TO REFLECT THE ABOVE CONCERNS, ALTHOUGH SOME COMMENTATORS HAVE BROADENED THE ISSUE TO ENCOMPASS A GENERAL CONSIDERATION OF "INTERVENTION" AS A PHENOMENON OF INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONS. THIS HAS OF COURSE BEEN FUELED BY WIDELY-PUBLICIZED ALLEGATIONS OF CLANDESTINE USG ACTIVITY IN CHILE (PLUS THE GENERAL BELIEF THAT ECUADOR HAS FREQUENTLY BEEN THE SCENE OF SIMILAR GOINGS-ON). "INTERVENTION IS INTERVENTION", THE COMMENTS HAVE RUN, AND SOME WRITERS HAVE CALLED FOR A RESOUNDING OAS CONDEMNATION OF ALL SINNERS, WITH A STRONGLY-IMPLIED NOD TOWARD THE U.S.

5. THE GOE, HOWEVER, HAS SHOWN FEW SIGNS OF WISHING TO LET THE MEETING DEGENERATE INTO A ROUND OF GRINGO-BAITING, ALTHOUGH CONFERENCE EVE PUBLICITY OF ADA CASE IS DISTURBING. WHEN DRAWN OUT BY THE PRESS LUCIO PAREDES, PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ AND OTHER GOE SPOKESMEN HAVE ASSUMED A DIGNIFIED STANCE, REPLYING IN LOW-KEY BUT APPROPRIATELY NATIONALIST GENERALPPIES. THEY HAVE TAKEN PAINS TO MINIMIZE THE ABSENCE OF SECRETARY KISSINGER AND HAVE GONE ON PUBLIC RECORD AS ENDORSING THE VALIDITY OF HIS EXCUSES.

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6. BEYOND THE OFFICIAL LEVEL AND THAT OF QUITO'S COMPARATIVELY FEW INFORMED OBSERVERS, THE OAS MEETING HAS NOT MADE ANY NOTABLE IMPACT. THE MAN IN THE STREET IS VAGUELY AWARE OF ITS TAKING PLACE AND IS UNDOUBTEDLY PROUD OF HIS COUNTRY'S HAVING BEEN CHOSEN AS THE CONFERENCE SITE. HE IS ALSO UNDOUBTEDLY GRATIFIED AT THE MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION'S CLEAN-UP AND POTHOLE-PAVING EFFORT, A MUCH MORE TANGIBLE BENEFIT OF THE CONFERENCE. BUT, AS NOTED ABOVE, CUBA IS

NOT REALLY A LIVE ISSUE HERE AND THE CITIZENRY (OTHER THAN THE TOURIST INDUSTRY) APPEARS TO BE VIEWING THE SPECTACLE WITH A CERTAIN BENIGN INDIFFERENCE. THIS IS NOT TRUE OF THE UNIVERSITY, TO BE SURE, AND THERE ARE REPORTS OF DISTURBANCES PLANNED BY VARIOUS RADICAL FACTIONS. THERE HAS BEEN AN IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY OF ACTIVITY BY LOCAL SECURITY FORCES, HOWEVER, AND -- GIVEN THE GOE'S OBVIOUS DETERMINATION TO HOST A GOOD MEETING -- IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT WOULD-BE DEMONSTRATORS WILL BE GIVERN MUCH REIN.

BREWSTER

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